

Housing and Demographics Element

This element addresses current conditions and future affects related to the Land Use and Economic Development Element's findings and recommendations. While the Subarea Plan is focused primarily on non-residential growth – that is, new business and industry – there will also be residential and population growth as new housing is built. This growth will occur with or without the economic development impetus. And, it will occur in both urban and rural areas. The pace of residential and population growth will be affected as new jobs are created and employees are attracted to South Lewis County to live as well as work.

The 2010 federal census will reveal current information about local demographics including population, income, housing, and commuting. When this information becomes available in 2011, it will inform and refine the following analysis. For the time being, much of this analysis relies upon population estimates, both for current and forecasted populations.

The Cities

Lewis County has adopted population allocations for cities, unincorporated urban areas, and the rural area. These allocations are based on a state-wide analysis which forecasts a 20-year countywide population baseline (99,746 in 2030 for Lewis County). The forecasted countywide population baseline is then distributed among jurisdictions for use in ensuring that their comprehensive plans show how land use and infrastructure will accommodate the growth. The 2030 population allocations for the South County Cities are:

- Toledo 1,131
- Vader 885
- Winlock 4,550

The 2030 countywide rural population allocation (42,776) is not distributed to localized areas.

In 2008, the City of Toledo calculated its development capacity to determine if there was enough land available to meet the 20-year population allocation. In order to house a population of 1,131 by 2030, Toledo will need 190 new housing units, but the Toledo UGA has capacity for only 70 more units.

The City of Vader analyzed its residential land capacity in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan update and found that there is enough land to support the existing population (785 people) and an additional 981 people for a total urban capacity of 1,766. The Vader Comprehensive Plan assumes 2.5% annual growth for a 2025 population forecast of 1,406. For either this forecasted population, or for the allocated population (885 in 2030), there is more than enough residential land in the Vader UGA.

The Winlock 2005 Comprehensive Plan update forecasted that an estimated 616 housing units in 2004 would increase to 1,775 units in 2025; that the population will grow from 1,448 people in 2005 to 4,561 people in 2025; and that jobs will increase from 700 in 2005 to 3,034 in 2025. However, the Comprehensive Plan does not calculate the existing development capacity within the Winlock UGA or the amount of additional capacity that will be required to meet the 2025 population and employment projections.

Rural Area Housing and Population

Current population estimates for rural South County are based on available data for the number of homes, or dwelling units. According to the Lewis County GIS Division, there are about 3,100 dwelling units in rural South Lewis County and 85-90 percent of them are occupied. In Lewis County overall, the average household size is 2.60 people per household; this results in a current South County rural population of about 7,000 people.

There is the potential for further rural residential growth through the subdivision of land based on the existing parcel configuration and zoning. Overall, South County has about 4,800 parcels in rural zones (RDD-5, RDD-10, RDD-20), excluding UGA and resource lands. Many of these parcels are larger than the minimum lot size in the existing zone and can potentially be subdivided. Theoretically, if all of these large parcels were subdivided to the maximum density allowed, there could be an additional 8,000 lots, bringing the total potential residential capacity of South County to nearly 10,000 houses. While this level of rural development is very unlikely, some rural residential growth will occur as existing vacant parcels are developed and new parcels are created and developed. Overall, in the urban and rural areas of South County, there will be sufficient capacity for new housing to meet the demand that could result from the creation of approximately 5,800 new jobs by 2030 as described in the Land Use and Economic Development Element.

Demographic Trends

The total urban and rural population in the South Lewis County Subarea was approximately 8,760 in 2000 and grew to an estimated 9,450 by 2008. This was an overall increase of 8%, or an annual population growth of 1%. The Subarea population is getting older: the median age increased from 37.7 to 39.6 between 2000 and 2008. The educational attainment in the Subarea is increasing: the percentage of the population without a high school diploma declined by 3.0% (from 20.0% to 17.0%) between 2000 and 2008, and the percent of people with at least a bachelor's degree increased by 1.8% (from 12.9% to 14.7%).

The proportion of people in the Subarea working in white-collar and service jobs has increased while the percent working in blue-collar jobs has decreased. Median household income increased from \$37,738 to \$46,695 between 2000 and 2008 with an annual growth rate of 3.0%. This is less than the annual growth rate for Lewis County and Washington State, which had growth rates of 3.3% and 4.1%, respectively.

Household size increased slightly from 2.75 to 2.77 between 2000 and 2008. During the same period, the rate of home ownership increased from 73.2% to 74.0%. The median home values nearly doubled, increasing from \$116,055 in 2000 to \$225,280 for an annual growth rate 11.8%. Due to the recent decline in the housing market, these values and growth rates have likely declined since 2008.

Conclusions

Population growth and housing demand are affected by many variables including household characteristics, job and economic opportunities, local services availability, and individual quality of life expectations. South Lewis County is an extremely attractive location for most residents, but there are limitations that influence choices about living here. The community vision described in the Introduction speaks to the desire of maintaining the current character while also creating more housing choices, accommodating a greater range of living styles, and generating more economic opportunities for people to select the area as their home.